

**ICAR MEDCOM**

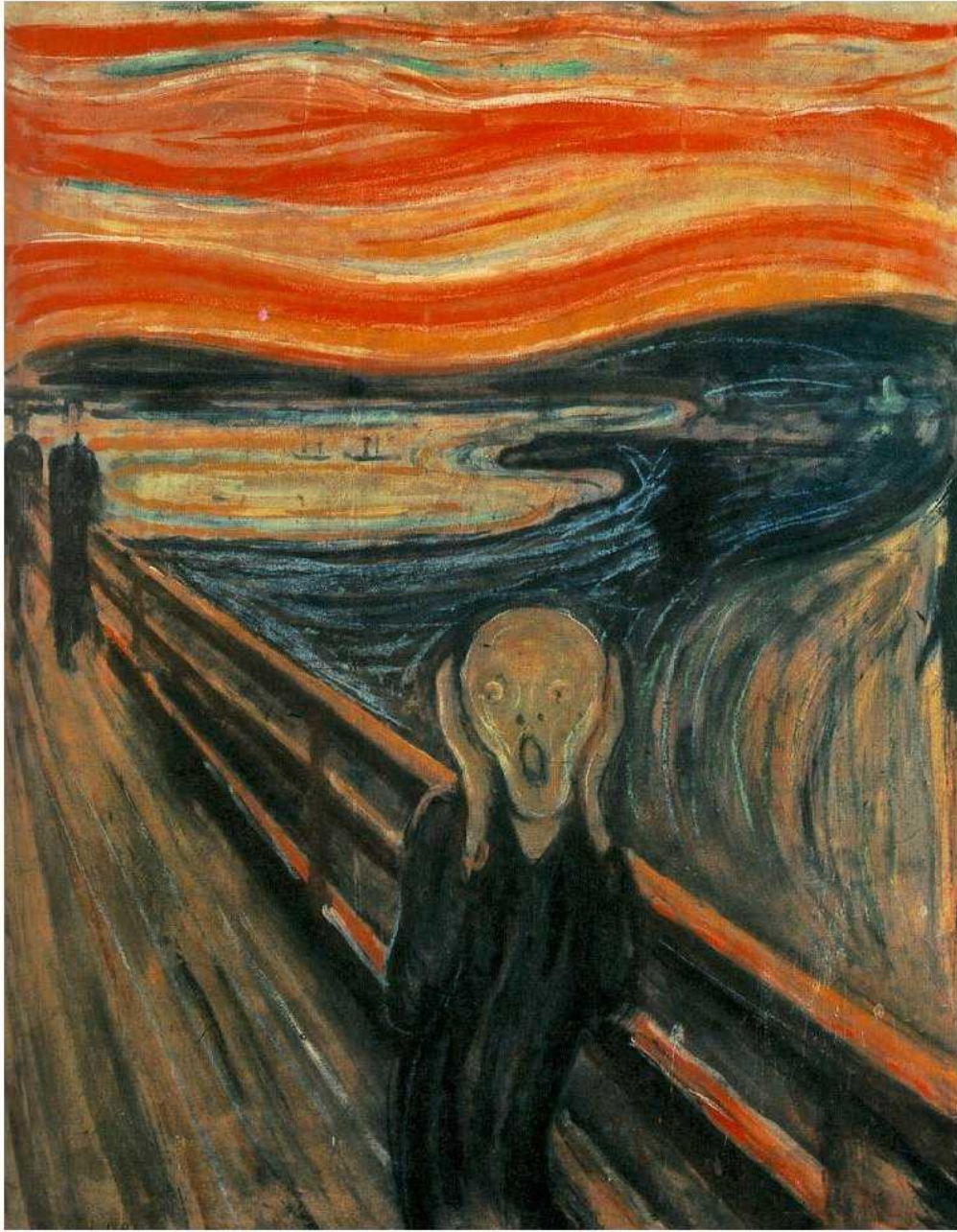


**QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING  
THE WORLD STATUS  
OF PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT  
FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUERS  
AND SKI PATROLLERS**

**ICAR MEDCOM group:** Iztok Tomazin, Marie Nordgren,  
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# PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (PSS)

**Supporting human capacity to improve mental health and wellbeing** - any kind of organized help on the field of coping with stress and other negative psychosocial consequences of participating in mountain rescue and similar activities is included.



# **PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (PSS) FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUERS AND SKI PATROLLERS**



- **Currently, little data is available about the PSS for mountain rescuers and other providers of medical treatment in mountains and other difficult accessible locations in ICAR member countries.**
- **This survey aims to gather information concerning the needs of PSS for mountain rescuers and ski patrollers and also about the current state of this of support in their organizations.**

# QUESTIONNAIRE - INSTRUCTIONS

- The questionnaire should be completed by one representative of each ICAR MEDCOM member country. If more members of the Commission represent the same country they should agree who of them completes the questionnaire with the help of the others
- If particular country has more than one rescue organizations then a representative (member) of each rescue organization should complete the questionnaire.
- **For statistical reasons it is requested that the questionnaire be fully completed or responses will not be utilized.**

# GENERAL DATA



- **The name of the country and rescue organization**
- **Number of different MR and ski patrol services in particular country/region**

Organisations	Total	Financially sustained	Privately financed
Government			
Non-governmental			
Organized by the ski area			

- **Number of individuals (members) in your organization**
- **Your organization activity: mountain rescue / SAR / ski patrolling / all**

# PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT SITUATION IN YOUR ORGANIZATION 1



- Which kind of PSS is available in your organization?

<i>Routinely debriefing to provide initial psychosocial relief to rescuers after every or every difficult mission: discussing what happened, discussing thoughts and emotions about what happened, learning and recognizing the signs and symptoms of distress, coping strategies, other issues related to rescue work burden</i>	Yes, always / Occasionally / No
<i>Optional consultation with your colleagues (lay persons) which are specially trained for this purpose (confidants)</i>	Yes, always / Occasionally / No
<i>Optional (on request) consultation with professionals (psychologist, psychotherapist...)</i>	Yes, always / Occasionally / No
<i>Workshops, lectures etc. about psychosocial issues</i>	Yes, always / Occasionally / No
<i>Literature about stress and other psychosocial issues</i>	Yes, always / Occasionally / No
<i>Other – please describe:</i>	

# PSS SITUATION

## IN YOUR ORGANIZATION 2



- **Is it organized by your organization itself or from other sources?**
- **Is it available to all members?**
- **Are members aware/informed about it?**
- **PSS is implemented on request/routinely?**
- **PSS professionals in your organization are employed/voluntary/available from other organizations**
- **Is PSS actively provided/suggested in your organization?**
- **Is culture of using PSS high in your organization?**
- **How many (%) your colleagues (rescuers, ski patrollers...) have already participated in different activities of PSS?**



# STATEMENT ABOUT

## ICAR MEDCOM

## RECOMMENDATIONS



- **Have ICAR MEDCOM recommendations been published in any Mountain Rescue magazine in your country?**
- **Are ICAR MEDCOM recommendations a part of the education programme in your Rescue organization?**
- **Do you feel necessary that ICAR MEDCOM establish a recommendation about PSS for mountain rescue organizations?**

# SUMMARY



- **This information will enable the ICAR MEDCOM to improve the accuracy and usefulness of the recommendations in the future**
- **It is not the intention of this study to compare the quality of psychosocial support in Mountain Rescue Services among the ICAR member countries.**
- **Our goal is to discover the current state of psychosocial support in Mountain Rescue and other emergency services in mountain regions of ICAR member countries.**
- **With this data we hope to be able to provide future recommendations to serve the psycho-social needs of mountain rescue personnel.**

# PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS AND MOUNTAIN RESCUE

**TWO CASE STUDIES**

**By Tom Wood, Alpine Rescue Team**

**Evergreen, Colorado, USA**

**ICAR Terrestrial Rescue Commission**



## CASE #1



**“BRANDON”**

- **Lives in Southeastern U.S.**
- **Volunteers on a Cave and Cliff Rescue Team**
- **Quit his job as a paramedic and member of a paid fire department after stopping CPR and “zoning out” during a call**
- **Started second career doing rope access**



## CASE #2



**“ROBERT”**

- **Lives in Western U.S.**
- **Former U.S. Marine, Combat Veteran**
- **Volunteered on a Mountain Rescue Team for 3 years**
- **First 5 Search and Rescue Missions were all recoveries**
- **Quits SAR after combat related Psychological Stress was triggered by SAR recoveries**
- **Now works as a Registered Nurse in a Veteran’s hospital**



# IN CONCLUSION

- **Many cases do NOT have these happy endings: Suicide becoming more common**
- **Volunteer SAR personnel do not get as many resources allocated for mental health awareness as do their paid counterparts**
- **Post Traumatic Stress doesn't always result in a disorder**
- **No stigma should be attached to those who acknowledge being affected by trauma**
- **Education is key**



# QUESTIONS?

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